

## Gibsonville – Recreation and Scenery Resources

### Existing/Desired Condition

The forested landscape provides for a high quality recreation experience for visitors engaging in a wide range of recreational activities. Recreational activities occur year round in and around the Gibsonville Project Area. Recreational uses include camping, touring historic mining sites, hunting and fishing, wildlife viewing, boating, OHV riding, gold panning, snowmobiling and crosscountry skiing.

Gibsonville Town and Cemetery is a historic gold mining site and one of the focal points of the designated Plumas Backcountry Discovery Trail. This is a series of connected roads in the Plumas Backcountry which is promoted for touring the forest roads and viewing the historic and natural features along the way. The Backcountry Discovery Trail Guidebook was produced by the Forest in partnership with the California State Parks OHV Division in 2013.

Quincy LaPorte Road is one of the most popular designated Oversnow Vehicle (OSV) routes on the Feather River Ranger District. The LaPorte Snowmobile Club and Forest Service employees operate a California State OHV owned groomer to groom the route and provide for high quality trail experience for both motorized and nonmotorized users. The local club and visitors from outside of the region enjoy the XX miles of groomed snow trails and access to otherwise inaccessible areas during the winter months. Quincy LaPorte Road transecting Gibsonville leads to Onion Valley warming hut and a very popular play area for snow activities. This route through the Gibsonville Project Area is also one of the routes for recreation events, including the LaPorte Snowmobile Club Poker Run. Sierra County Road 900 which also crosses through the Gibsonville Project Area is one of the designated Groomed Snow Routes, leading to the Sawmill Warming Hut. The route is regularly used for much of the year by visitors to the Pilot Lake Baptist Camp located on Delahunty Lake.

Activities on or adjacent to Quincy LaPorte Road are very visible to Forest visitors and locals. The road connects these two communities and recreation users.

There are two motorized trails which cross units of the Gibsonville project area. These are single track motorcycle trails, FS #9M23 and #9M21.

### Visual Quality Objectives

The Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) describe different degrees of acceptable alteration of the natural and characteristic landscape. They are considered measurable standards for management of “seen” aspects of the land.

The Visual Quality Objective (VQO) the majority of the Gibsonville Project area is XXX modification. Activities may dominate the characteristic of the landscape but must utilize naturally established form, line color and texture. Activities should appear as a natural occurrence when viewed in the foreground of middleground. The rest of the project area has a VQO of partial retention where activities may be evident but must remain subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Partial Retention areas are managed for moderately high visual quality and often seen as middleground and background from

higher use recreation areas and are of primary or secondary visual importance. The segment of the project area classified as partial retention includes the Gibsonville historic site.

Project Design Features (see Table X) have been developed to protect scenery and recreation resources and experiences.

#### Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum describes the recreation setting and opportunities. The PNF ROS inventory is included in appendix R of the 1988 Forest Plan. Approximately 70% of the Gibsonville Project area is classified as "Roaded Natural". The rest of the project area is "Roaded Modified".

Roaded Natural is characterized as a predominately natural environment where resource modifications and utilization practices (such as timber harvesting) are evident. Evidence of the sights and sound of human activity is moderate and in harmony with the natural environment. Opportunities exist for both social interaction and moderate isolation. This classification covers the main transportation route and viewshed along Quincy LaPorte Road.

Roaded Modified is a general resource management area of the forest, characterized by pickup trucks and many miles of dirt and gravel roads. Other than trails and trailheads, virtually no improvements are present. Users experience low interaction. This is typically considered more middleground or background, compared to the high visibility and more development of roaded natural.

#### Direct/Indirect Effects

##### **Proposed Action**

The project would have some indirect effects on the recreating visitors and adjacent private landowners. The project activities would result in some increase in project related traffic on roads in the area. Recreational users and private property owners would be affected by the increased traffic and associated disturbances. These may include traffic delays from temporary road closures and/or mobilization of logging equipment. These effects may discourage recreational use by creating unexpected inconveniences from large vehicles, dust noise or delays in travel. Other temporary effects may be smoke visible from prescribed burning in the project area. The smoke may be visible to residents of LaPorte. These effects are temporary in nature. Management requirements are designed to limit temporary road closures to reduce inconveniences to Forest users and passersby.

In the long-term, the project would improve the overall health of the forest and safety from wildfire thereby improving recreation opportunities in the future. Design features would reduce the short-term effects to recreation.

The proposed action mitigates roadside hazard areas. Overall, the proposed project would in the long-term, directly benefit the recreating public and local private landowners by removing hazard trees. Hazard trees are often difficult to manage during snow grooming season, due to several feet of snow

pack base layer. The hazard tree mitigations of the proposed action will benefit the snow grooming operations, and recreation users passing through the area.

The proposed action includes thinning and installation of signage around the Gibsonville historic site. The new interpretive signage will greatly benefit the public by educating them on the history of the area and enhancing their recreational experience.

### **Alternative C**

The “California Spotted Owl Interim Recommendations for Management” alternative would have similar effects to the proposed action. Due to the reduced intensity of the spotted owl alternative, the expected effects and inconveniences to the recreating public and passersby would be less than the proposed action.

### **No action alternative**

If the no action alternative is the selected, there would be no change to the existing situation for recreational use and visual quality in the area.

### **Cumulative**

There are no reasonably foreseeable future actions proposed in the Gibsonville Project Area that would affect recreation resources. In general, the project area would be open and accessible to most forest visitors during implementation and adverse cumulative effects are not expected.